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MR 87-188 #2

Annex No. 1


BY DJH

DATE 6/9/88

Extract from Conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and Mr.
R. Nixon on the 26th July, 1959.

R. NIXON We sincerely consider that the unification of Germany would help towards the strengthening of peace. You know history - when the atmosphere surrounding two halves of a strong nation is heated, the seed of dissention is sown by this very fact and a favourable soil is set ready for the appearance of a leader who will strive to unite the country by any means. So it has been and so it will be. But you and we have various points of view in this question.

As far as the proposals for changes in the situation in Berlin are concerned, we must take into account that the present crisis has arisen through your actions and not ours. I say this not as an accusation but as a statement of fact. But since the crisis has arisen, the powers concerned must find a solution.

Clearly, you consider your proposals reasonable.  what sort of a situation are you putting us in? You must recognise that all our four powers bear a definite responsibility towards Germany. In these circumstances it is impossible to agree that one power should say "the question must be decided as I say and all the others must agree with me". In order to find a way out of the present situation we must start from the status quo and recognise the status quo in all respects and changes in it, if any are necessary, must come about only by mutual agreement. It is impossible to imagine that Eisenhower would go to a summit conference merely to put his signature to your proposals on the Berlin question. I wish to emphasise this: when the great powers must negotiate, they can do this only on a basis of equality, they must discuss each other's proposals on an equal footing. This means that at a conference

our proposals too must be examined. I do not think that you would go to a conference if we said to you: "Come and put your signature to our proposals, which we consider to be only ones acceptable."

The Geneva Conference cannot be considered fruitful if it cannot ever establish the procedure for the future discussion of these questions. We and you both have a different point of view and, of course, neither side will be able to go to a summit conference if the other side declares that only its point of view can be accepted. We cannot agree to unilateral actions by the opposite side.

This does not mean, of course, that the present situation cannot be changed, that we cannot negotiate successfully for a new agreement on Berlin or Germany. But when we are concerned with powers who respect one another and themselves, we must not twist things so that one side is obliged beforehand to put its signature to the proposals of the other side.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV You put the question correctly when you say that President Eisenhower must not go to summit talks merely to sign proposals put forward by the other side. If both sides take up rigid, irreconcilable positions, then there is no point in holding talks. One must go to a summit meeting only when both sides wish to come to an agreement.

R. NIXON That remark interests me. Please elucidate it.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV I say that there is sense in a summit meeting only if there exists a desire to negotiate successfully on a mutually acceptable basis and to find a solution to the questions at issue. Allow me to put before you a similar question to the one you put before me. You say, "Why should the President go to a summit meeting merely to put his signature to our proposals?" I agree with this. But I also consider that there is no point in my going to a meeting of heads of government to sign an

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agreement on the continuation of the occupation status for an indefinite period. The occupation status already exists and we in no way need any sort of conference for this. And I will not go if the aim of a summit conference is to perpetuate the occupation status. I would be better off going to shoot duck; at least I would be able to rest on the journey.

R. NIXON Do you consider that in the Berlin question there is room for fruitful talks or do you consider that only your own proposals are acceptable? I do not ask you to say which parts of your position you are prepared to alter, or what concessions you are prepared to make, but do you admit the principle that changes in your position are possible.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV I say frankly: that is a legitimate question, but I think that it would be better to tell you what concessions we are not prepared to make; that would be easier and then President Eisenhower can decide whether it is worth having a meeting with us. I declare to you that we will not agree to the perpetuation of the occupation regime in West Berlin. Whether a summit meeting takes place or not, we will not agree to such a decision.

As regards a solution to the question of preserving the present social system in West Berlin and the German question as a whole, it is possible and necessary to seek a way to the solution of these questions. In this sphere there is nothing immutable in our position, everything in this sphere must be flexible, everything must be alterable as part of mutual concessions to bring our two positions together. We are ready to show flexibility in all questions

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except one: there is no point in going to a summit conference to sign anything providing for the prolongation of the occupation status.

Put forward any proposals to guarantee the preservation of the existing social system in West Berlin, to maintain West Berlin's freedom of communication and so on, and we will examine them. As regards the German peace treaty we are prepared to agree that the present relative level of armed forces in the world should not be changed, that West Germany should remain in N.A.T.O. and East Germany in the Warsaw defence treaty until conditions are created in which military blocks can be liquidated. Finally, we are prepared to agree to withdraw our troops from the G.D.R., Poland and Hungary if on the other side troops are withdrawn from corresponding territories. If you wish, this problem can be solved gradually. We are prepared to discuss any proposals in this sphere. You must take into account one thing: our people want peace and the government is acting in accordance with their wishes.

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Annex No. II

Extract from conversation between N.S. Khrushchev and
Mr. R. Nixon on the 26th of July, 1959

L. THOMPSON

We are also not entirely satisfied with the present situation in Berlin. Since we have not been successful in bringing about reunification of Germany, we have tried to go to meet you in order to prevent a crisis from occurring. We are for moving forward step by step towards the settlement of differences and on other problems, and not only on one narrow question. But if you force a crisis in the Berlin question, this is fraught with dangerous consequences for peace and it is difficult for us to see how it accords with your statements about your desire for peace.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV

A threat is audible in your words, Mr. Ambassador. You are threatening us with war in the event that we try to bring about a settlement of this question. Take care, Mr. Ambassador, do not use such words. If you take steps leading to the unleashing of a war, you will find yourselves fighting against a Peace Treaty. If we do not come to an agreement with you, we shall sign a Peace Treaty with Eastern Germany. If you declare war on us in this event, then the people will see who wants peace and who wants war.

We are very sensitive to such threats. If we did not want negotiations, we would ourselves have signed a treaty with the G.D.R. without warning you in advance. It is our right, it is the right of any country sharing a frontier with East Germany. Well, if we sign a Peace Treaty, will you

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declare war on us because of this? Declare war, then everyone will see who is the aggressor.

R. NIXON

Clearly you misunderstand the Ambassador.

L. THOMPSON

I was not in any way threatening

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV

I understand your hints.



L. THOMPSON

I simply wanted to say that if it is intended to force the development of a crisis over the Berlin question, that would not be a step towards peace.

N.S. KHRUSHCHEV

How is it possible to speak about "the forcing of a crisis" by our side. Are we really doing anything which could threaten your interests? What is West Berlin to you, if you do not want to fight against us? If you merely came out in favour of the preservation in West Berlin of the social system which exists there at the moment, then we, as I have said, are prepared to enter into negotiations, prepared to furnish any sort of guarantee. There is no difference of opinion here. It is another matter if you wish to perpetuate the occupation of West Berlin. Here there is nothing to discuss. We are against this.

We can come to an agreement about the time when a Peace Treaty should be signed. But you must bear in mind that the signature of a Peace Treaty would mean that you

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- 3 -

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would lose your right to occupy West Berlin. This you must clearly understand. This is not an ultimatum - logical common sense leads to this conclusion.



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